

WHITE PORCUPINE SALE 1

March 16, 2009, Land Board

This project is the first of six to eight timber sales proposed under the White Porcupine Multiple Timber Sale Project EIS.

Location of Sale:

- Swan Unit (NWLO) – Approximately 10 air miles south of Swan Lake, Montana
- Lake County – Section 2, T23N-R18W; Section 34, T24N-R18W
- 100% Common School Trust.

Sale Volume & Estimated Value:

- The estimated volume is 14,491 tons of sawlogs at 5.6 inches diameter inside bark (DIB), or 2,900 MBF.
- The estimated minimum value is \$19.34/ton for stumpage and Forest Improvement on all merchantable sawlog timber harvested.
- 5.00 tons/MBF is the estimated conversion factor at 5.6 inches DIB.

Sale & Harvest Treatments:

- The sale consists of three harvest units totaling 217 acres.
- Silvicultural prescriptions include:
 - 40 acres of seed tree. Seed tree harvest would leave approximately 2 to 4 trees per acre. The low tree per acre average is the result of insect and disease presence as well as excessive amounts of tree mortality.
 - 175 acres of seed tree with reserves. Seed tree harvest with reserves would leave approximately 5 to 7 trees per acre. The two reserve areas are small unharvested patches of timber within the specific unit totaling 4.0 acres. These reserve patches provide a natural seed source, hiding cover for wildlife, and limit site distances for grizzly bears as called for in the Swan Valley Grizzly Bear Conservation Agreement (SVGBCA).
 - The remaining 2 acres are road right-of-way clearing,
- A minimum of 2 large snags per acre would also be retained in each harvest unit.
- Western white pine, western larch, Douglas-fir, and western red cedar would be favored for retention throughout the sale.
- This sale treats approximately 217 acres of old growth stands that have been identified as critically threatened by insect and disease. Post-harvest, about 217 acres would not meet the department's definition of old growth.
- All regeneration (seed tree and seed tree with reserve) harvest treatments are meant to: address insect and disease issues; promote appropriate species composition and desired future conditions; and balance revenue recovery with environmental considerations such as wildlife habitat, watershed health, and soil stability.

Harvest Systems:

- 47% tractor
- 53% skyline

Road Construction:

- Approximately 0.57 miles of new road would be constructed, and approximately 2.03 miles of existing road would be reconstructed. An additional 7.46 miles of existing road would receive maintenance or spot improvements. After the sale, all forest roads used for this sale would meet current BMPs. Current open/closed road status would not change and all new roads would be closed to motorized use once the sale is completed. Traffic flow and road use were designed to meet the requirements of the SVGBCA.

Public Involvement & Issues:

Public scoping for the White Porcupine Multiple Timber Sale Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) began on May 31, 2007 with a 30-day public comment period. The project proposal was mailed to interested individuals, owners of adjacent land, State Land Board staff, special interest groups, private industry, State representatives, local newspapers, and federal and state agencies. Public notices were also published in the *Bigfork Eagle*, the *Kalispell Daily Interlake*, and the *Swan Valley Pathfinder*. A news article also appeared in the *Bigfork Eagle*. As a result of these initial scoping efforts, a total of 15 letters, 2 requests to remain informed, and one phone call were received from a wide range of interested parties.

- In December 2007 and March 2008, DNRC sent out newsletters to update interested parties about the project. Four responses were received as a result of the newsletters.
- On April 9 and June 16, 2008, members of the ID Team conducted an open house meeting at the Swan Ecosystem Center in Condon and a presentation for the Community Club in Swan Lake, respectively.
- The ID Team conducted three public field tours of the project area on September 10, 2007 as well as on July 7 and October 9, 2008. A fourth tour was conducted on Saturday, October 18, 2008 to accommodate those individuals who could not attend during the work week.
- The DEIS was prepared and mailed out for comments on August 22, 2008 with a 30-day comment period which closed on September 23, 2008. A total of five comments to the DEIS were received.
- Primary concerns by those who commented throughout the project development include: impacts of timber harvesting and road construction on old growth and wildlife habitat, protection of water quality and fisheries habitat, maintaining biodiversity, project economic viability, project cost analysis, aesthetics, and forest health and vigor. These resource concerns and others were addressed and incorporated into the project's design through the development of appropriate mitigation measures and contractual language
- Final EIS published and mailed out on January 20, 2009. Alternative B identified as proposed decision in FEIS with final decision made on February 4, 2009.

Issues and Mitigations:

Old Growth – Timber management in old growth stands on this sale would concentrate on stands with chronic and widespread insect and disease problems. A total of 217 acres of old growth would be treated as a part of this sale and would not meet the department's definition of old growth post-harvest. This proposed sale would maintain the classified old growth on the Swan River State Forest at 11,899 acres. Under Alternative B and upon completion of all six to eight proposed timber sales and smaller

permits, old growth acreage on the Swan River State Forest would be reduced from 12,116 acres to 11,153 acres – a reduction of 963 acres or 7.95 percent.

Many of the larger trees in these old growth stands are dead or dying as a result of insect and disease issues. In addition, many of the seral species are declining while shade tolerant species are increasing and moving away from desired future conditions (DFCs) Seed tree harvest treatments are designed to reduce short and long-term insect and disease problems, increase the presence of seral species (western larch, western white pine, etc.) and reduce the amount of shade tolerant species such as grand fir, balance value recovery of dead and dying trees with environmental considerations, and move these stands toward desired future conditions.

Western white pine, western larch, Douglas-fir, and western red cedar would be favored for retention within all harvest units. Leave trees would represent various size and age classes. Stands would move from predominantly shade tolerant or climax species, such as grand fir, to shade intolerant or seral species such as larch, white pine, and Douglas-fir. This would also move these stands towards the department's desired future condition for the Swan River State Forest. This proposed treatment is consistent with the State Forest Land Management Plan and Rules.

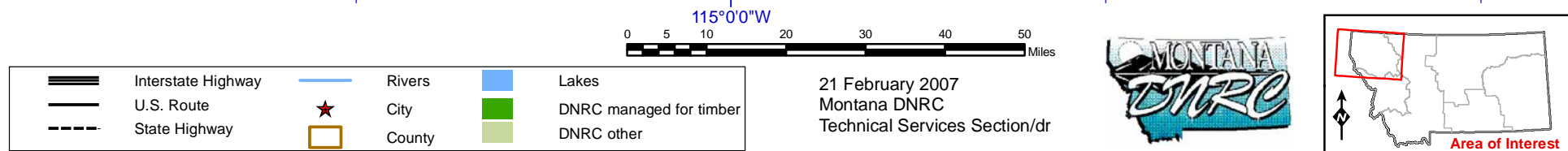
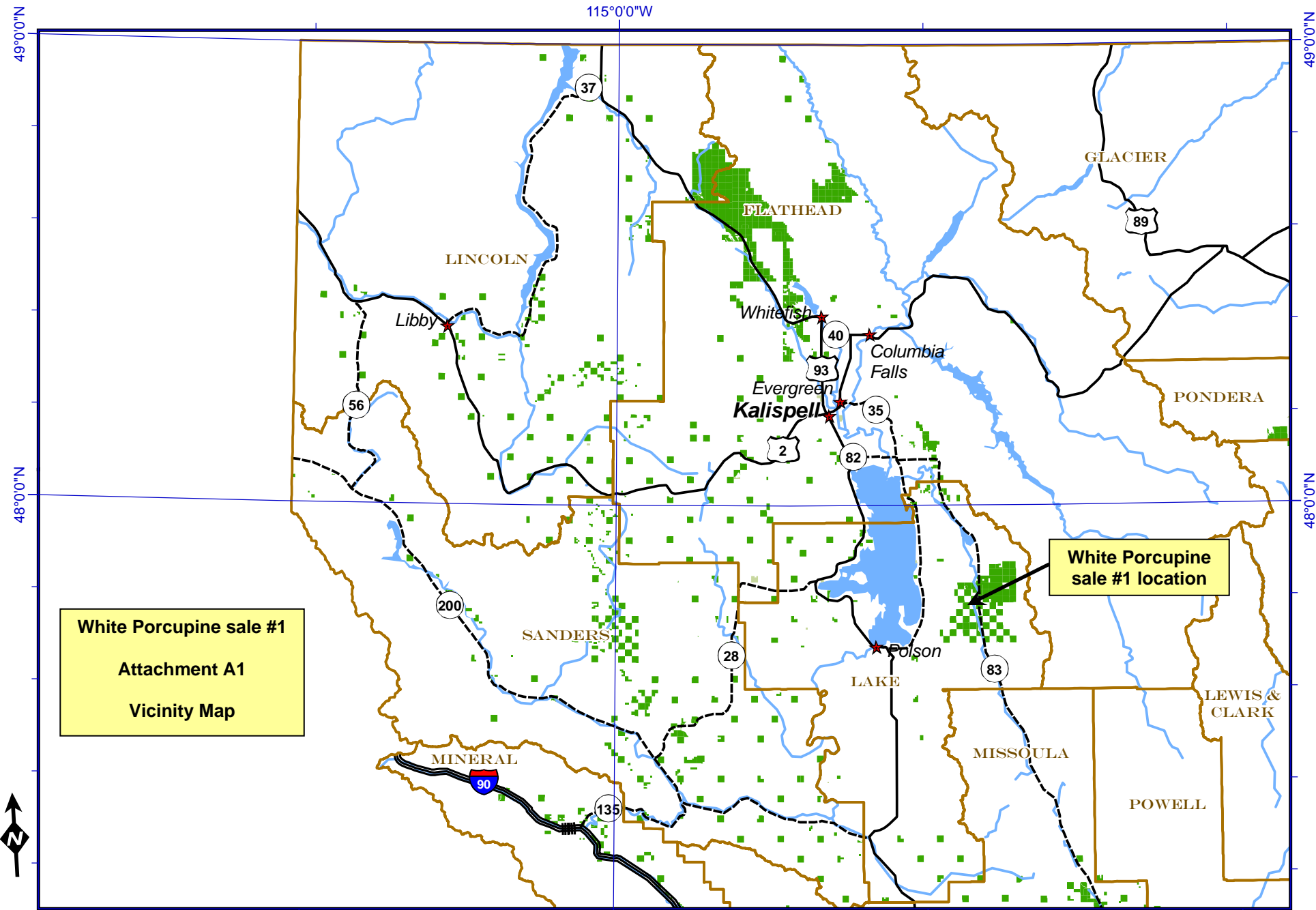
- **Wildlife** – Road closures would remain in place. New road construction would occur behind existing closures and be closed to motorized use. Forest connectivity to allow animals to move between areas would be slightly reduced but provided for along riparian corridors and some ridgetops. At least 2 large snags per acre would be retained after harvest. Thermal cover for deer and elk would be slightly reduced.
- **Threatened and Endangered Species** –
 - **Grizzly Bear** – This sale conforms to the Swan Valley Grizzly Bear Conservation Agreement. Hiding cover requirements are met through the creation of reserves within cutting units. New roads would be closed to motorized use. Harvest activities are not permitted during the spring season from April 1 through June 15 of each year.
 - **Bull Trout** – SMZs/RMZs are part of this timber sale design. No timber harvest is planned within SMZs along streams with a bull trout population. Unit boundaries have been designed to limit potential impacts to streams and comply with all applicable Rules and Laws.
- **Water Quality/Streams** – Mitigations, such as SMZs and RMZs, are an integral part of the sale design and would provide protection to streams within the sale area. These vegetative buffers range from 50 to 150 feet in width and comply with current state laws and requirements. There are no plans to harvest within SMZ or RMZ buffers.

All new road construction and reconstruction would meet current BMPs for water quality. After completion of all timber sales and permits, overall sediment delivery would be reduced on Whitetail, Woodward, and South Woodward creeks as a result of rehabilitating old bridge crossings, and improving existing roads.

- **Biodiversity** – The sale harvest prescriptions would have a variety of size and age classes present after harvest. Seral stands would replace the non-typical climax stands identified for treatment. Harvest prescriptions along with post-harvest burning and planting would contribute to creating a variety of stands that are more reflective of historic species composition on the landscape.

- **Economics** – The sale is expected to generate a minimum of \$187,803.36 for the Common School Trust. The sale would also spur the local economy through creating or sustaining as many as 29 high paying timber industry related jobs.
- **Forest Health** – This sale is designed to address forest health issues by treating stands with significant insect and disease problems. The stands selected for treatment exhibit poor vigor and growth along with significant mortality due to insect and disease problems. Without treatment, these problems will likely worsen and spread as documented by regular aerial survey flights. Treatments would remove dead and dying or infected trees to allow for healthy trees to take their place or to allow healthy residual trees to grow to full potential.

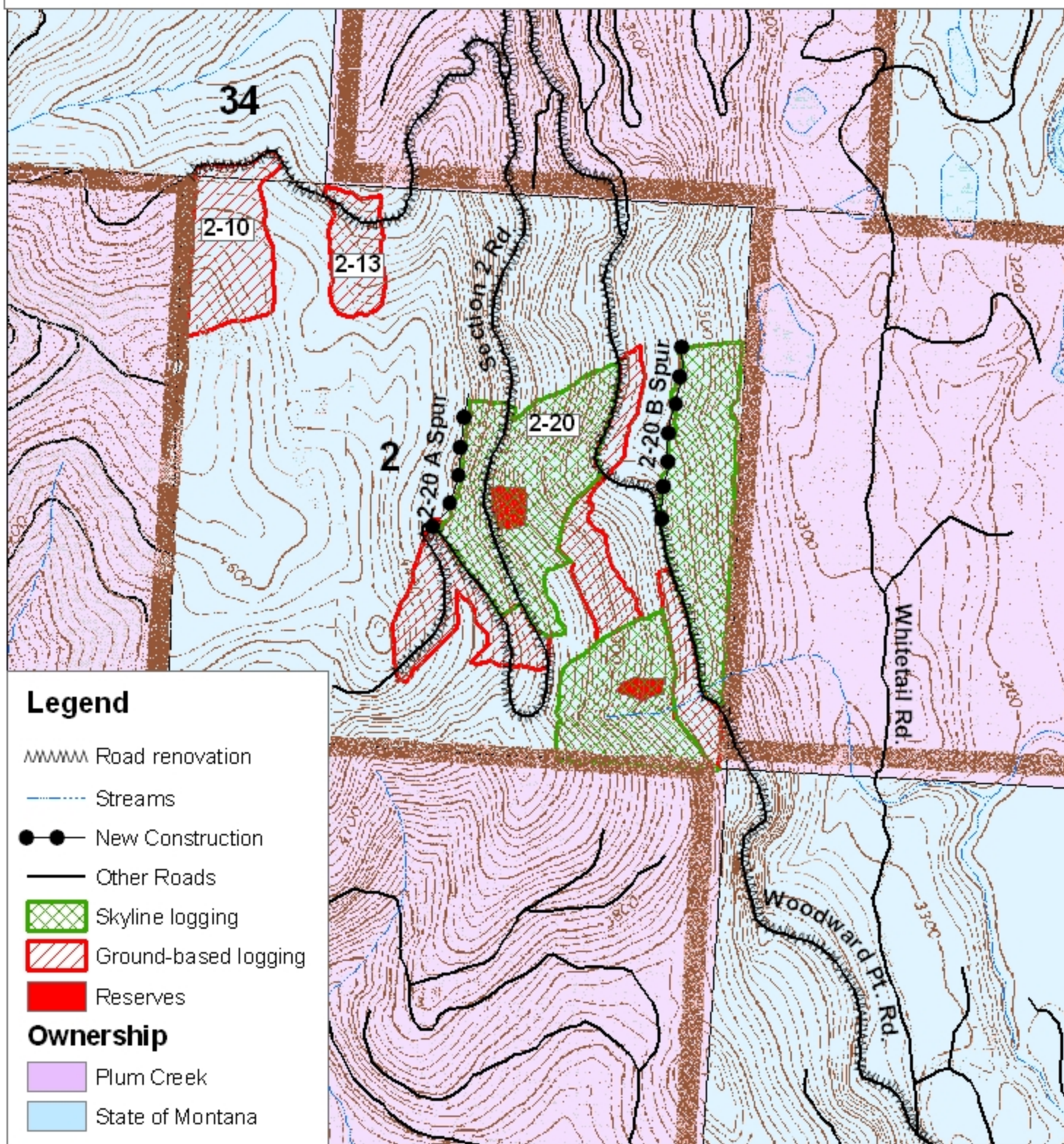
The Director recommends the Land Board direct the Department to sell the White Porcupine Sale 1.



White Porcupine Sale 1
Attachment A3
Section 2, T23N R18W
Section 34, T24N R18W



1,600 800 0 1,600 3,200 4,800 6,400 Feet



1:40-foot contours
created by: K. Baker 12/16/08

White Porcupine Sale 1
Attachment A2
Sections 2 and 24, T23N R18W
Section 34, T24N R18W



4,400 2,200 0 4,400 8,800 13,200 17,600 Feet

